

## REPORT

FROM

## THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

IN COMPLIANCE

*With a resolution of the Senate, on the subject of permitting officers of the army to retire on half pay.*

JANUARY 8, 1840.

Ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
January 7, 1840.

SIR: In reply to the resolution of the Senate, of the 27th ultimo, asking, 1st, "What would be the effect upon the military service of the country, of a regulation by which all officers of the army, on arriving at sixty years of age, should be permitted to retire from the service upon half pay;" and, 2d, "What would be the probable annual charge upon the Treasury by such a regulation," I have the honor to submit the accompanying report by the Commanding General, and venture to hope that the importance of the subject will be deemed a sufficient apology for his presenting at the same time a plan calculated to provide for disabled officers and to render the service more efficient.

Very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

J. R. POINSETT.

Hen. R. M. JOHNSON,  
*President of the Senate.*

HEAD QUARTERS OF THE ARMY,  
Washington City, January 4, 1840.

SIR: In conformity with your directions, I have considered the two queries contained in the resolution of the Senate of the 27th of December, 1839, viz: 1st, "What would be the effect upon the military service of the country, of a regulation by which all officers of the army, on arriving at sixty years of age, should be permitted to retire from service on half pay?"

2d, "What would be the probable annual charge upon the Treasury of such a regulation?" And I have the honor to report, that upon an examination of the probable ages of the officers, that there does not appear to be in the whole army, more than eight, who have arrived at

the age of sixty, and few, if any of them, would be willing to retire on half pay, because the half pay would be too small to afford them a decent subsistence. The highest half-pay would not probably exceed thirty seven and a half dollars a month, and the lowest twenty-five; but let it be supposed that four, or one half of them, should retire on the half-pay list, say two colonels and two lieutenant colonels, the expense a year, for the two colonels would be; at \$37 50 a month each - - - \$900 00

For the two lieutenant colonels, at \$30 a month each - - - 720 00

Total expense a year - - - - - 1,620 00

Of the officers above sixty years of age, there are many of them hearty, hale, and effective men, capable of rendering good service, and are now actively and usefully employed.

As it is presumed that the object of the resolution is to allow officers who may conceive themselves unfit for the active duties of the profession, to retire, and make room for others more efficient in physical power, and at the same time to provide for such officers above sixty years of age as may be willing to retire, I would respectfully beg leave to suggest a plan of a more extended nature and on a more liberal scale of compensation, free from any expense or burden to the Government, which, besides having the advantage of economy, would render the corps of officers quite effective and consequently improve greatly the condition of the whole service.

My plan is this: Let every officer who, from age, wounds, or other infirmities, shall become unfit to perform the duties of his office, be retired from service on his ordinary pay, without rations, or other allowances whatever; and let the officer next in the line of promotion fill the place of such retired officer, with the rank of the retired officer, with the emoluments belonging to that rank, and the pay of the commission from which he may be promoted. So that, if a colonel be retired, the lieutenant colonel, who, according to the established rules of promotion should receive the vacant colonelcy, would be *colonel* with the pay of lieutenant colonel, and the emoluments of a full colonel. This promotion would vacate the lieutenant colonelcy, which, in like manner would be filled by the promotion of the major, who would enjoy the rank of lieutenant colonel, with the pay of major and the emoluments of lieutenant colonel; so would the eldest captain be major, with the pay of captain, and the rank, command, and emoluments of major; so with the eldest first lieutenant, who would be captain, with the pay of first lieutenant, and the emoluments of captain; and so down to the foot of the regiment, where there would be a vacancy, which could be supplied by the brevet second lieutenant, or graduate of the Military Academy, or new appointment, according to circumstances.

Now the effect of this plan will be seen by exhibiting the cost of a regiment as it exists, and the cost of a regiment with a retired colonel on ordinary pay, and it will be seen that there will be an actual saving in money, with the advantage that all the officers would be effective. If the retired colonel shall have served forty years, he will leave eight rations a day to the public, which eight rations are worth, at twenty cents each, (the regulated price) \$1 60 a day, or 584 dollars a year, and the additional expense of placing a second lieutenant at the foot of the regiment, will be 300 dollars a year, making an actual saving of 284 dollars a year. See table herewith, made out by the paymaster-general, marked A. Now if the whole of the officers of the army, supposed to be non-effective, were retired on the

same principle, there would be something like twenty officers ; eleven in the artillery and nine in the infantry. The extra rations received by these officers for long service, computed at one ration for every five years' service, are estimated to amount to sixty-four rations a day for the artillery, and fifty for the infantry ; making 114 rations a day saved, or 41,610 rations a year, at twenty cents, amounting to the sum of 8,322 dollars. Now to supply the twenty vacant second lieutenantancies, occasioned by the retirement of the twenty officers, will cost, at 300 dollars each, 6,000 dollars a year ; which sum, deducted from 8,322 dollars, leaves a clear saving of 2,322 dollars a year.

By the present system, all officers receive full pay and emoluments, whether they are capable of service or not, and the effective officers are obliged to do the duty of the non-effective, without any advantage ; but by the above plan, the non-effective officer will have a reasonable allowance made him on being retired, and the officer who will be obliged to do his duty, will receive advanced rank with additional emoluments ; so that if the proposed plan be adopted, it may be expected that all parties interested would be satisfied.

I have the honor to be, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

ALEX. MACOMB,

*Major General, Commanding in chief.*

Hon. J. R. POINSETT,

*Secretary of War.*

A.

*Present organization of a regiment of infantry.*

No.	Rank.	Pay.	Subs'tence.	Forage.	Clothing.	Amount.
1	Colonel - - -	\$900 00	\$138 00	\$384 00	-	\$1,722 00
2	Servants - - -	168 00	146 00	-	\$60 00	374 00
1	Lieutenant colonel - - -	720 00	365 00	288 00	-	1,373 00
2	Servants - - -	168 00	146 00	-	60 00	374 00
1	Major - - -	600 00	292 00	288 00	-	1,180 00
2	Servants - - -	168 00	146 00	-	60 00	374 00
10	Captains - - -	4,800 00	2,920 00	-	-	7,720 00
10	Servants - - -	840 00	730 00	-	300 00	1,870 00
10	First lieutenants - - -	3,600 00	2,920 00	-	-	6,520 00
10	Servants - - -	840 00	730 00	-	300 00	1,870 00
10	Second lieutenants - - -	3,000 00	2,920 00	-	-	5,920 00
10	Servants - - -	840 00	730 00	-	300 00	1,870 00
		16,644 00	12,483 00	960 00	1,080 00	31,167 00

*Proposed organization of a regiment of infantry.*

No.	Rank.	Pay.	Subs'tence.	Forage.	Clothing.	Amount.
1	Colonel, retired - - -	\$900 00	-	-	-	\$900 00
1	Colonel, with pay of lieutenant colonel - - -	720 00	\$438 00	\$384 00	-	1,542 00
2	Servants - - -	168 00	146 00	-	\$60 00	374 00
1	Lieutenant colonel, with pay of major - - -	600 00	365 00	288 00	-	1,253 00
2	Servants - - -	168 00	146 00	-	60 00	374 00
1	Major, with pay of captain - -	480 00	292 00	288 00	-	1,060 00
2	Servants - - -	168 00	146 00	-	60 00	374 00
10	Captains, one receiving pay of first lieutenant - - -	4,680 00	2,920 00	-	-	7,600 00
10	Servants - - -	840 00	730 00	-	300 00	1,870 00
10	First lieutenants, one receiving pay of second lieutenant - -	3,540 00	2,920 00	-	-	6,460 00
10	Servants - - -	840 00	730 00	-	300 00	1,870 00
10	Second lieutenants, one a brevet - -	3,000 00	2,920 00	-	-	5,920 00
10	Servants - - -	840 00	730 00	-	300 00	1,870 00
		16,944 00	12,483 00	960 00	1,080 00	31,467 00
Should the retired colonel be entitled to eight additional rations, it would reduce the estimate - - - - -						
						584 00
						30,883 00

The sum of \$300 is to be added to the above estimate for as many officers, not exceeding ten, as may retire from the regiment, from which sum should be deducted the amount of additional rations to which each retired officer may be entitled.